



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	OPPELLA, AR	Accident Number:	FTW91FA033
Date & Time:	01/27/1991, 0130 CST	Registration:	N291R
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-30	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

DURING A NIGHT DEPARTURE, THE AIRPLANE IMPACTED TREES 65 FEET ABOVE THE GROUND, APPROXIMATELY .25 MILE FROM THE RUNWAY AFTER EXECUTING A TURN LEFT OF 90 DEGREES. THE AIRPLANE CAME TO REST IN A LAKE. THE RUNWAY IN USE FOR THE DARK NIGHT DEPARTURE WAS 20. THE RUNWAY WAS LOCATED IN A DEPRESSION ON TOP OF A MOUNTAIN SHROUDED BY FOG AND CLOUDS, PROVIDING NO HORIZON FOR A VISUAL REFERENCE. EXAMINATION OF THE AIRPLANE'S ELECTRICAL SYSTEM REVEALED THAT AT THE TIME OF IMPACT THE INSTRUMENT PANEL LIGHTS WERE NOT ILLUMINATED. THE SWITCH WAS IN THE ON POSITION. THE INSTRUMENT PANEL LIGHTS CIRCUIT BREAKER WAS FOUND POPPED. EVIDENCE OF THE PILOT STRIKING THE LEFT SIDE OF HIS HEAD ON THE INSTRUMENT PANEL AND THE SIGNIFICANT INJURIES TO THE LEFT SIDE OF THE TORSO AND EXTREMITIES INDICATED THE PILOT WAS REACHING DOWN WITH THE RIGHT HAND, WITH THE LEFT HAND ON THE YOKE, IN AN EFFORT TO RESET THE INSTRUMENT PANEL LIGHT'S CIRCUIT BREAKER.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO MAINTAIN A PROPER CLIMB RATE FOLLOWING LOSS OF HIS VISUAL REFERENCES AND ALLOWING HIMSELF TO BECOME DIVERTED DURING THE TAKEOFF. FACTORS IN THE ACCIDENT WERE INTERRUPTED INSTRUMENT LIGHTING AND THE DARK NIGHT CONDITIONS.

Findings

Occurrence #1: AIRFRAME/COMPONENT/SYSTEM FAILURE/MALFUNCTION

Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF

Findings

1. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM,CIRCUIT BREAKER - POPPED/TRIPPED
2. (F) INSTRUMENT LIGHT(S) - DISABLED

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

3. OBJECT - TREE(S)
4. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
5. (C) PROPER CLIMB RATE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	69, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/09/1990
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	10641 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N291R
Model/Series:	PA-30 PA-30	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	30-808
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	04/19/1990, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	58 Hours	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2212 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-320-B1A
Registered Owner:	PAUL G. JONES	Rated Power:	160 hp
Operator:	PAUL G. JONES	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	7 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 3200 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	130°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	6°C / 3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	LITTLE ROCK, AR (LIT)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0130 CST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	PETIT JEAN (MPJ)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	920 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	2	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	5980 ft / 73 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	MATTHEW ELLIS	Report Date:	03/31/1993
Additional Participating Persons:	A. MOORE; LITTLE ROCK, AR		
Publish Date:			
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.ntsb.gov/pubdms/ .		

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